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AMERICAN ART NEWS.

Entered as second-class mail matter, February 5, 1909,
at New York Post Office under the Act of
March 3, 1879.

Published Weekly from Oct. 15 to May 15 inclusive.
Monthly from May 15 to Sept. 15 inclusive.

AMERICAN ART NEWS CO., INC.,
Publishers.

JAMES B. TOWNSEND, President and Treasurer,
18-20 East 42d Street.

CHARLES M. WARNICK, Secretary,
18-20 East 42d Street.

LONDON OFFICE.—Art News, 67-69
Chancery Lane.

PARIS AGENT.—Felix Neuville, 2 bis rue
Caumartin.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Year, in advance	\$2.00
Canada (postage extra)	.35
Foreign Countries	2.50
Single Copies	.10

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Brentanos, 5th Ave. & 27th St.

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AMERICA—WORLD'S ART MART.

Never was the axiom that "history repeats itself" better exemplified than by the continued importation from the ancient homes of Europe of great masterpieces. When, in the days of the Renaissance, Venice and Genoa and other Italian cities, then at the height of their power and glory, attracted through the wealth of their merchant princes and nobles, the great art works of the time, so later did these, with the shifting of power and wealth to Holland and later on to England and France, find their way to those countries. Later on, again this time by and through conquest, some of the world's masterpieces under Napoleon went to France.

And now the pendulum has swung far westward and America has become the art mart of the world. Within the past three months there have come from famous foreign collections and old English mansions, some of the most costly and noted of great pictures. The

Vermeer came from France to Philadelphia and Mr. Widener, the Velasquez portrait of Philip IV to New York and Mr. Frick, the Percy Van Dycks to Washington and Mr. Clark, and now a great Turner awaits disposition in New York, and it is reported that Rembrandt's landscape, "The Mill," valued at a half million, may fall to an American collector out of the Marquis of Lansdowne's collection.

Last year saw the importation of the Cattaneo Van Dycks, the Franz Hals family group, and the Velasquez portrait of Duke Olivares. Where the money is the great art works out of the European collections will inevitably proceed. "History repeats itself!"

LATEST ACADEMY SCHEME.

Mr. John W. Alexander, President of the National Academy, is fertile in schemes and plans for a new Academy building. We regret that he has not acted on our suggestion and circulated a petition to Mr. Frick for the donation of the well located old Lenox Library Building, for the purpose, but he now announces that if the city will condemn the two block fronts on the east side of Fifth Ave., from 40 to 42 streets, this location would make an excellent site for a new Academy building, which would well complement the new Library just opposite. The suggestion is a good one, but the enormous cost of the proposed site would, we fear, prohibit its being selected. To close up a street, such as 41st, would also be a matter for careful consideration. Fine as would be the site we cannot feel that it is a feasible one, and we ask Mr. Alexander to again turn his attention to the Lenox Library suggestion. Mr. Frick has just given, it is reported, nearly a half million dollars for a Velasquez portrait. A site for an Academy building would be a more enduring monument to his public spirit and civic pride.

THE DUVEEN CASE.

The New York Herald states that Duveen Brothers have intimated to the government officials that they are willing to pay the government approximately \$1,000,000 in settlement of the civil claims against them.

It was reported that Duveen Brothers had stipulated that the government agreed to impose only a fine in case of conviction in the criminal case against them, but it is now declared, however, that no such demand has been made by the dealers and that if an offer of \$1,000,000 is accepted by the government the criminal prosecution will not be affected in any way.

Henry A. Wise, U. S. District Attorney, asserts that Attorney General Wickersham has not been giving attention to the case, as has been reported, and that the government does not contemplate an agreement for a compromise in the criminal case.

"I am going right ahead with the prosecution of the criminal case and there will be no compromise," declared Mr. Wise.

No offer of settlement in customs frauds is formally recognized by the government until those seeking a settlement have deposited with the Sub-Treasury a sum equal to the amount offered. It is said that Duveen Brothers have not made such a deposit.

OBITUARY.

John M. Carrere.

John M. Carrere, the architect, died on Wednesday evening in the Presbyterian Hospital as the result of a taxi-cab accident Feb. 11 last. He was born in Rio Janeiro in 1858, the son of John and Anna Maxwell Carrere, both Americans, was educated in Switzerland and Germany, and spent five years in the Beaux Arts in Paris, where he was graduated in 1882. Returning home he entered the employ of McKim, Mead and White in 1883, and two years later, formed, with Thomas Hastings, the firm of Carrere and Hastings, which lasted until his death.

He was a member of the leading Architectural and Fine Art Societies, twice president of the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and an Academician.

With Mr. Hastings, Mr. Carrere designed some of the most noted buildings in the country and left a lasting impression upon American architecture. The Moorish hotels at St. Augustine, the New Theatre, Harvard Club, Carnegie Institute, Washington, Yale Memorial buildings, the country houses of E. C. Benedict, C. Ledyard Blair, Giraud Foster and the city houses of the late R. M. Hoe, Henry T. Sloane, Dr. Herter, Dr. Dunham, Elihu Root, Burrall Hoffman and George L. Rives, were among their creations.

Mr. Carrere married Miss Marion Dell of Jacksonville, Fla., in 1886, who, with two daughters, survive him.

Fritz von Uhde.

Fritz von Uhde, the German historical and genre painter, died in Berlin last week. He was born in Saxony in 1848, served in the army until 1877, and then went to Munich to study the old German masters. A little later, not finding himself in sympathy with Piloty and Diez, he went to Paris to study in Munkacsy's studio. He painted his "Family Concert" in 1881, and his "Arrival of the Organ Grinder" in 1883. He became then an intense naturalist, and began that series of paintings of Biblical scenes and subjects, with modern surroundings and costumes which made a sweeping change in German art ideas and methods, and in which he was followed by the younger painters of Germany. His "Suffer little children to come unto Me" in the Leipzig Museum, and "The Walk to Bethlehem," are perhaps his most widely known works.

James Fitz Gerald.

James Fitz Gerald, an art dealer and salesman, well known to the art business world of New York and Baltimore, died suddenly of pneumonia Monday morning last in this city. He was born in Ireland in 1845, and when eighteen, came over to Baltimore and established an art business. Some thirty years ago he entered the house of William Schaus as a salesman, and was with the house for many years. He had been connected with the Fifth Ave. Art Galleries the past few years. He leaves a widow, a daughter, and three sons. Mr. Fitz Gerald had many of the virtues and few of the faults of his race, a most genial and agreeable personality, and a charm of manner and conversation which, with a generous character, endeared him to a host of friends, who mourn him deeply and sincerely.

William Graham.

William Graham died in his 83rd year in Buffalo, N. Y., last week. For many years he lived and worked in Capri, where he had a studio with Charles Caryl Coleman. His work is represented in most of the art museums of the world and in private collections.

QUESTIONED HISTORICAL PORTRAIT.

Editor *American Art News*. Dear Sir: In your issue of Feb. 18 you publish a letter from Mr. Charles Henry Hart of Philadelphia, arraigning you for stating that the portrait of Mary Ball Washington, in the Wm. Lanier Washington collection, in the Jumel Mansion was painted by Adolf Ulrich Wertmüller in 1784, to which you rejoin, "The statement on which we based our article was prepared by Mr. W. H. Shelton, curator Jumel Mansion."

I beg through the *Art News* to say that the original statement in the N. Y. Evening Post, made by me as above, was on the claim and belief of Mr. Washington who owns the picture. I had not examined the authorities as to Wertmüller's coming to this country, all of whom seem to agree that he came in 1794, except "Bryant's Dictionary," which puts it as late as 1797, which was the date of his return and assuming citizenship.

Mr. Hart is evidently correct in his assertion that the portrait was not painted by Wertmüller, and Mr. Washington will doubtless concede as much. What I wish to do in reply to Mr. Hart, is mainly to defend Mr. Washington's good faith in making the original claim.

The portrait came to him from Dr. A. A. Davis, of 149 East 63 St., N. Y., then a very old man, and since dead. On the back of the canvas is the signed statement of Dr. Davis to Mr. Washington.

New York, March 20, 1905.

"The oil painting, 18x21 1/2, which I have this day transferred to you, is an authenticated original portrait from life of MARY BALL WASHINGTON, the mother of GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON, and was painted by Adolph Ulrich Wertmüller, a native of Stockholm, Sweden, who visited America 1784-1786, at which time he painted portraits of General Washington and the above mentioned portrait of his mother.

"This portrait of Mary Ball Washington was found in Frederickburg, Va., about 1850, by Shearjashub Spooner, author of the Dictionary of Painters and Engravers, and the restorer of Boydell's 'Shakespeare Gallery,' who bought it from a member of the Ball family, who found it rolled up in an old trunk where it had been for many years.

"Upon the death of Mr. Spooner it became the property of his widow, who died about 1885, in Plainfield, N. J., who bequeathed it to her sister, the wife of Henry P. Townsend, Esq., of 609 Madison Ave., New York City.

"Mrs. Townsend gave it to me during her lifetime to be delivered after her death, and it came into my possession in May, 1904."

(Signed) A. A. Davis.

It was claimed by the several owners of the portrait, that Spooner assigned it to the brush of Wertmüller.

In December, 1908, Mr. Washington contributed an article to the "Pennsylvania German," a magazine of genealogy, etc., in reply to an article by the Rev. Horace Edwin Hayden, who stated that "no portrait of Mary Ball exists except Lossing's fictitious portrait." The last paragraph in Mr. Washington's article concludes: "It would please me very much to hear from those competent to pass judgment as to their opinion or conclusions as to the genuineness of my portrait, and I shall be pleased to give ample opportunity to any one interested to inspect and study it carefully at my home at 1700 Broadway, New York."

I can say of the portrait that it belongs to the period when Mary Ball Washington lived, and that it is a distinguished example of some able painter's work, and that it bears a striking family likeness to George Washington. It is of the period when portraits were not signed. Probably there is no portrait of Washington by Stuart or Peale or Trumbull, bearing the signatures of these painters. (I speak without the authority of an examination.) The best painters were comparative nobodies, who were not suffered to attach their names to the portraits of their distinguished patrons.

That was a very convenient condition, when Stewart's eyes gave out and his daughter Mary continued to produce the misleading Athenaeum portrait. It, at least, saved a very worthy lady from the charge of forgery and gave her a means of livelihood long after her father died.

I am sure Mr. Washington will welcome criticism of the portrait from all visitors to the Washington Headquarters in the same modest spirit that prompted him to write the concluding paragraph of his article in the Pennsylvania German.

W. H. Shelton, Curator.
Washington Headquarters,